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was forced by this to produce one of the most effective samples of romantic nonsense in existence—a feat which he performed easily and well—he publicly disclaimed any responsibility for its pleasant and cheap falsehood by borrowing the story and throwing it in the face of the public with the phrase ‘As You Like It.’”²²

The contention that the dramatist was consciously conforming to the popular taste in this play is probably correct; but there is no reason to think that in doing this he was in a bad humor.

That Shakespeare shows special contempt for *As You Like It* “by borrowing the story” is a surprising suggestion. As a rule his plays were derived from sources that we know. I cannot go into details, but it is probable that *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, both written early in his career, are the only plays of the dramatist that are to be looked upon as presenting stories which are largely of his own invention. The manner in which he manipulates and supplements the material derived from his sources is, therefore, a fundamental subject of study in estimating aright the genius of Shakespeare. This topic is especially interesting in the case of *As You Like It*.

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NOTES ON BURNS AND ENGLAND

It is becoming more and more the fashion to recognize Burns’s interest in and debt to England, despite the fact that his critics and biographers, for many decades after his death, did their best to establish the “entirely Scottish” theory which we now realize to be unfounded on fact.¹ That Burns owed much to the vernacular tradition established by the Sempills, Hamilton of Gilbertfield,

²² *The London Daily News*, April 17, 1900, p. 12, kindly lent me by Professor Archibald Henderson. See also Shaw’s *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*, N. Y., 1907, II, 116-22.

¹ For examples of characteristic criticism emanating from north of the Tweed, see Jeffrey’s and Scott’s reviews of Cromek’s *Reliques*, in the *Edinburgh Review* for Jan. 1809 and the *Quarterly* for Feb. 1809, respectively; also Carlyle’s comments (1828) and Lockhart’s (1838). Later, when source-study was becoming fashionable, Principal Shairp, Stevenson, John Stuart Blackie, and a good many others only less influential contributed

Ramsay, and Fergusson, no one would deny. Equally true is it that he owed much—how much, indeed, no one knew till the *Centenary Burns* appeared,—to the unknown authors of Scottish song. But constant iteration of this fact will never establish the full truth of Burns's literary relationships, unless it be the case that his debt to other than Scottish writers was so slight as to be negligible. I think it can be shown that Burns was closer to the English literary tradition of his day than has been generally recognized; so close, indeed, that until one realizes how much more he was than the last of the vernacular school, one can understand neither the man nor his work.

Consider first Burns's use of the English language. As President Neilson has pointed out, the old idea that Burns wrote well only in Scots, is not in accord with the facts. Many of his best-known, most characteristic, and most poignant verses are pure English. In his letters, where there is virtually none of the vernacular, one finds more evidence of his mastery of English. It has long been the fashion—we seem to have taken the cue from Carlyle—to belittle these prose relics, and to point to their stilted phraseology as proof that Burns was ill at ease in the Southron tongue. But I think that a very few minutes' reading will convince anyone that the artificiality of phrase which cumbers so many of the pages is certainly to be ascribed to Burns's attempt to master an "epistolary style" utterly foreign to him, and not to the language. Indeed, when one passes over the Sylvander-Clarinda correspondence, and the many letters to persons above the poet in social rank, and turns to those, say, to Thomson, or Mrs. Dunlop, one finds him writing simply and effectively, and with a command of the language which shows how far wrong he was in speaking of English as a foreign tongue. It was as much his own as the "braid Scots" of "Tam." Indeed, when once or twice he writes a letter in the vernacular, it is an obvious *tour de force*.² And the fact that in 1787 most

to the development of the dogma. South of the boundary Matthew Arnold and W. E. Henley are only two of many who have commented on the "Scottishness" of Burns, and have helped build up the idea that not only is his literary ancestry predominantly Scottish, but that his good work is to be found only in the dialect poems.

² See for instance the letter to William Nicol, 31 May 1787; *Scott Douglas*, iv, 243.

intelligent lowland Scotsmen could have written English prose as readily as Scottish, and would hardly have thought of using anything else in correspondence, does not lessen the importance of the too often forgotten fact that Burns had excellent control over this medium of expression.

Another connection with England appears in the books from which Burns formed his taste for reading. John Murdoch, the boy's first tutor, lists as "the books most commonly used in the school,"³ the Spelling-book, the Bible, Mason's *Collection of Prose and Verse*, and Fisher's *Grammar*. Gilbert Burns adds the following to the list begun by Murdoch:⁴ *The Complete Letter Writer*, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Pope, Addison, *The English Collection* (Mason's collection, referred to by Murdoch), and Fenelon's *Télémaque*. On this same matter hear the poet himself: "The earliest thing of composition I recollect taking pleasure in was 'The Vision of Mirza,' and a hymn of Addison's. . . . The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read again, were 'The Life of Hannibal,' and 'The History of Sir William Wallace.'"⁵ A little later in the same letter Burns acknowledges his debt to the *Spectator*, Pope, Shakespeare, Locke, Boyle, Ramsay, and the *Select Collection of English Songs*, which is generally supposed to have been *The Lark*, 1751. Again he writes, "My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's works. . . . I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I poured over them devoutly. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—'Tristram Shandy' and 'The Man of Feeling'—were my bosom favorites. . . . My reading was only increased by two stray volumes of Pamela, and one of Ferdinand Count Fathom, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except for some religious pieces which are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Fer-

³ *Scott Douglas*, iv, 346.

⁴ "Narrative by Gilbert Burns"; *S. D.* iv, 352 ff.

⁵ Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, *S. D.* iv, 4 ff. The first of the two books mentioned was probably Rowe's life of Hannibal (1737); the second was Hamilton of Gilbertfield's modernized (1722) English version, in orthodox couplets, very different from the old Scots poem.

gusson's Scotch Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding rustic lyre with emulating vigor." ⁶

This reference to Fergusson's influence on the young Burns has been often commented on, and no one would question its significance, though the direct influence of Fergusson was hardly in proportion to the magniloquence of Burns's phraseology. But at the same time that one notes Burns's enthusiasm for his predecessor's work, one should also remember that his early books were chiefly English books, that he grew up in an atmosphere where English influences were at work on him, and that these English influences were, according to his own word, very considerable.

When, later in life, it was Burns's privilege to buy books, one finds him still turning to England. Thus on July 18, 1788, he orders Smollett and Cowper from his friend Peter Hill of Edinburgh.⁷ Again, on April 2, 1789, from the same book-seller, Shakespeare and a Johnson's Dictionary.⁸ A year later the following are on his lists: Otway, Jonson, Dryden, Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Cibber, Macklin, Garrick, Foote, Coleman, and Sheridan.⁹ More evidence of the same sort could be added, if more were needed, to show his continuous interest in English literature.

Look at the question from another angle. What sort of incidental allusions, quotations, references, does one find in Burns's letters? Does he seem, judged by these *obiter dicta*, to be interested chiefly in Scottish literature? Quite the contrary. If one were to estimate Burns by his letters alone, one would think of him as a man who wrote Scottish songs because he liked to, but who knew eighteenth century English letters far better than Scots, and esteemed them more highly. Thus we find him alluding, in a manner which indicates a considerable degree of familiarity with the person named, to Addison, Cowper, Fielding, Goldsmith, Gray, Johnson, Mackenzie, "Ossian," Pope, Shenstone, Smollett, Sterne, Young, and to various periodicals, notably the *Spectator* and *Rambler*.¹⁰ Of the English poets whose work did not fall within the somewhat uncertain limits of the eighteenth century he refers to Donne, Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser. All in all, Burns

⁶ *S. D.* iv, 151.

⁸ *Ibid.* 225.

⁷ *S. D.* v, 140.

⁹ *Ibid.* 304.

¹⁰ Not all these persons are English by nativity, but all belong to the English tradition. I omit the dramatists already listed.

knew a good deal of English literature, and it is obvious that he knew much of it rather well.

In this connection it may be interesting to point out that among the whole list of English poets the following are his favorites, if we may judge by the frequency of allusion: Thomson, Shakespeare, Young, Milton, "Ossian," and Shenstone. Among the prose writers Mackenzie and Sterne are mentioned most often, and both may fairly be included in the list of non-Scottish influences. Obviously Burns was right when he said, "My favorite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as Shenstone . . . Thomson, Mackenzie, Sterne, Ossian. . . . These are the glorious models after which I endeavour to form my conduct."¹¹ He might have written, "Of the sentimental and English kind."¹²

¹¹ *S. D.* iv, 41.

¹² Parenthetically, I question whether it has ever been pointed out how thorough-going a sentimentalist Burns really was. Critics have noted his fondness for Mackenzie, the obvious sentimentalism in the *Clarinda* correspondence, and in many of the poems. In the letters to Mrs. M'Lehose, indeed, he seems at times almost to have been writing with a volume of Sterne open before him. Thus on June 25, 1794, he says: "Here I am set, a solitary hermit, in the solitary room of a solitary inn, with a solitary bottle of wine before me"—as near as his conscience would allow to Sterne's "one solitary plate, one knife, one fork, one glass." This, to Miss Wilhelmina Alexander, 18 Nov. 1786, can hardly be matched outside of Sterne: "It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, I said to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and rob you of all the property nature gives you—your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorne twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely browsing cattle, or the withering east?" (*S. D.* iv, 160). In 1794 he writes to George Thomson, apropos of the heroine of "Craigieburn Wood": "The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and in fact (*entre nous*), is, in a manner, to me, what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a Mistress, or Friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love." (*S. D.* vi, 311. The lady in question was Jean Lorimer.) He was in truth a disciple of Parson Yorick; in addition to the women for whom his passion was much more than sentiment, there is a long list of the adored ones for whom he was forced to limit his

If Burns's prose furnishes good evidence of his interest in English letters, it might be supposed that it would make equally clear that debt to Scottish poetry which has been so often commented on. This, however, is not the case. To begin with, the total number of references to Scottish vernacular literature is slight; of the old "makars" he mentions Barbour, "Blind Harry," and James I, but not in a way that indicates any actual familiarity with their works. Once he refers to "Scotland's Complaint." Of the more recent poets, those with whom he had more in common, he mentions Fergusson rarely but enthusiastically, Ramsay fairly often, and his own contemporaries, whom he calls "Scottish poetasters, . . . ill-spawned monsters,"¹³ two or three times. There are, of course, many references to Scottish song, and a number to the traditional ballads, which were neither Scottish nor English, but both. But on the whole the allusions to Scottish vernacular poetry are surprisingly few.

Again, one finds that by comparison with the large number of references to English poetry, Burns's comments on Scottish literature appear more negligible than they really are. Thus Ramsay, whom he seems to have known best among the Scots, figures in the correspondence less than half as often as Thomson.

Of course no one would suggest that the influence of these two poets can in any final sense be determined by the frequency of Burns's allusions to them. But I am convinced that such facts as these I have been trying to set forth, though not contradicting the old idea of a profound Scottish influence on the poet, make it

affection to what Sterne calls that "tender and delicious sentiment which ever mixes in friendship where there is a difference in sex." But Burns's sentimentalism went deeper than mere imitation of Sterne. He had persuaded himself, through the exercise of his reason, as he thought, that the emotions and not the intellect should be the guide of life; he believed in the perfectibility of mankind: "I am in perpetual warfare with that doctrine of our reverend priesthood that 'we are born into this world bond-slaves of iniquity and heirs of perdition, wholly inclined to that which is evil.' . . . I believe in my conscience that the case is just quite contrary." Thus he at least approaches the position of the philosophical sentimentalists of the mid-eighteenth century. But this of Burns's sentimentalism is of itself a large question. I mention it now only to add a little evidence of his interest in eighteenth century English thought.

¹³ *S. D.* v. 215.

certain that he was more interested in English literature than has been generally recognized.¹⁴

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THE RIMES OF STEFAN GEORGE

Although the battle over the significance of Stefan George in the development of the modern German lyric has not yet been ended, some critics such as Zwymann¹ and Lewisohn² calling him the greatest living lyricist, and others again such as Koch³ and Grummann⁴ styling him a mere *poseur* and euphuist,⁵ there is

¹⁴To the discussion of Burns's relations to England W. P. Ker has made an interesting contribution in the *Scottish Historical Review* for October, 1917. He points out that Burns had a great interest in history, but that he preferred English to Scottish, and that at the very time he was writing his most "Scottish" poems he was busily studying English history. Professor Ker further alludes to the fact that poems by Burns appeared in the *Annual Register*, and that Burns published both prose and verse in the *London Star*. The "Address to the Deil" and the "Dedication" are in the *Register* for 1787 (publ. 1789). The list of poems sent to London is not long, but is more considerable than Professor Ker indicates. To Peter Stuart's *Star* Burns sent the "Ode Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Oswald," "On the Duchess of Gordon's Reel-Dancing," "Ode on the Departed Regency Bill," "A New Song for the Kilmarnock Chapel," and the song, "Anna, thy Charms." To Mayne's *Star* he sent "The Whistle." To Lloyd's *Evening Post* went the "Elegy on the Departed Year"; to *St. James's Chronicle* the "Prologue for the Dumfries Theatre"; to the *Morning Chronicle* "Lines on a Banknote"; and to the *Gentleman's Magazine* the "Address to the Shade of Thomson." (For data, see notes to the *Centenary Burns*, under titles listed.)

¹ Kuno Zwymann, *Das Georgesche Gedicht*, 1902.

² Ludwig Lewisohn, *The Spirit of Modern German Literature*, 1915.

³ Vogt-Koch, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, II, 3d ed., 1910.

⁴ Paul H. Grummann in *The German Classics*, XVIII, 288-289.

⁵ Personally, I can not judge George as highly as Lewisohn or Zwymann, his admirer, who goes so far as to speak of the poet's readers only as *die Geniessenden*, nor, on the other hand, can I agree with Grummann, who makes him out to be almost a rank charlatan. A more unbiased opinion probably lies between these two extremes, for a poet who resorts to such striking artificialities and externalities as George does in order to frighten off *die Allzuvielen* can not be counted among the greatest artists, while,